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17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Nova High School opened in September 1963 as a unit of the South Florida Educational Center. It is experimental in concept, but not in curriculum. Its construction, features, equipment, teaching aids, and instructional methods have been tested and proved in other school systems. Its philosophy represents a return to fundamental education, but its purpose is to utilize scientific methods of learning in a scientific age, with the goal of providing the best possible education at the lowest practical cost.

All students are required to take English, physical education, mathematics, science, foreign language, social science and technical science each school year. Independent research is encouraged. An hour is provided each day for research or activities. As each subject is mastered, the student proceeds to the next level. Speed of advancement depends on capability and interest. No student can fail, and outstanding students may be graduated after two and one-third-years above the ninth grade level. A trimester system is in operation with 220 days in a school year, and with 70 minute class periods.

Parent and student reactions to the Nova program are favorable. Students are accepted on a voluntary basis.

Teacher aides relieve teachers of nonteaching chores; team teaching is utilized in selected areas. Such innovations as multipurpose classrooms, closed-circuit television, resource centers, and air-conditioning are financed by the omission of such traditional and expensive facilities as a large auditorium, a cafeteria with kitchen, and a spectator-sized gymnasium.

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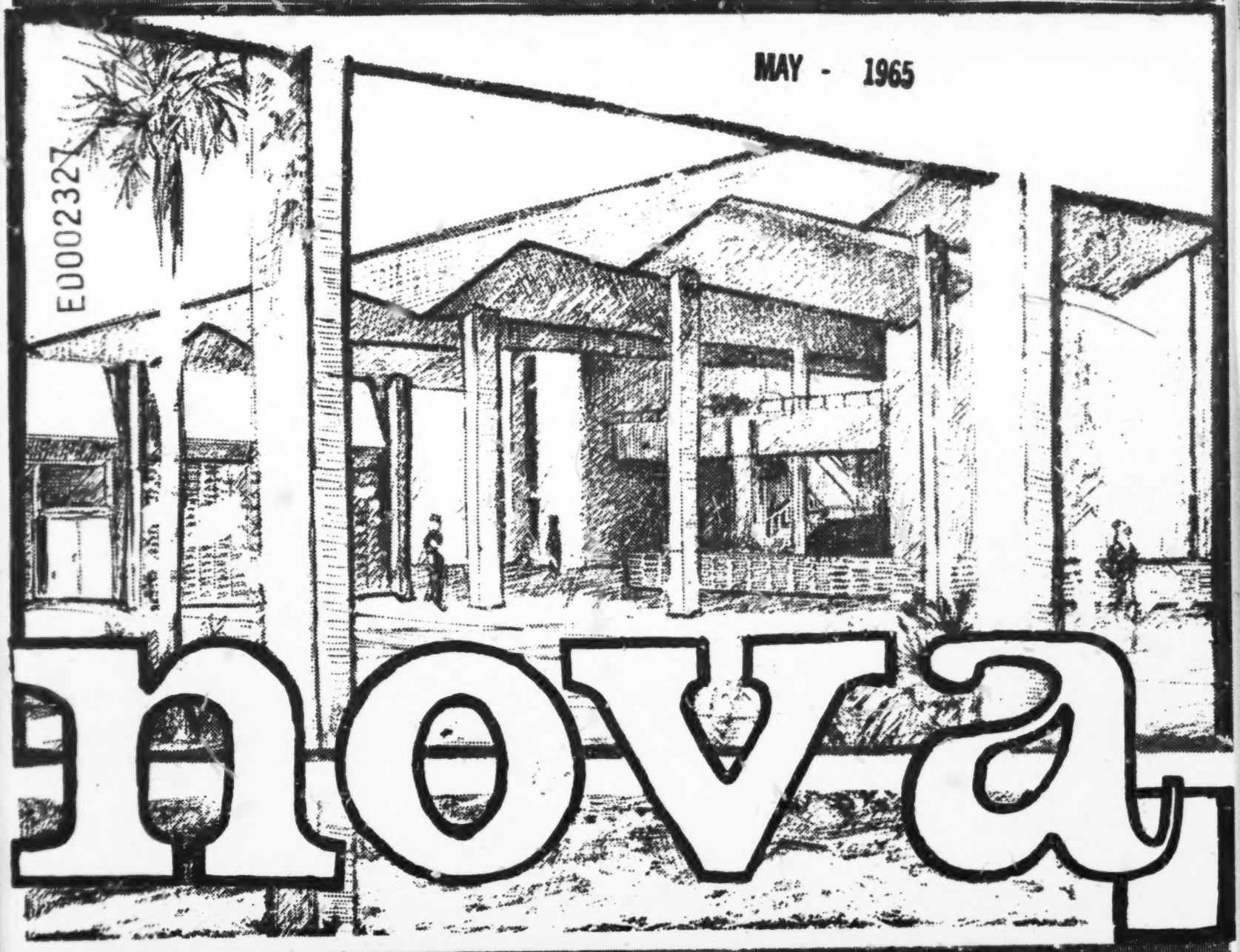

nova

HIGH SCHOOL

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Fort Lauderdale, Florida

division of broward county board of public instruction

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The School Of Tomorrow TODAY!

This is Nova High School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Its name means 'new' in Latin; the school itself is new in any language.

Nova High School, which opened in September, 1963, is one of two initial units of the South Florida Education Center – an educational complex imaginative and advanced in concept.

Eventually the complex will house a group of tax-supported schools encompassing kindergarten through junior college. Also planned is a privately-operated university, the Institute of Technology, which will offer four years of senior college plus graduate degrees in education, engineering, sciences, and related technological fields.

This long-range program, when completed, will present a continuous integrated process of learning unparalleled in educational history.

In its entirety this bold departure from 'traditional schooling' is known as the 'Nova Plan.' Nova High School is its working blueprint for the future.

What makes Nova different?

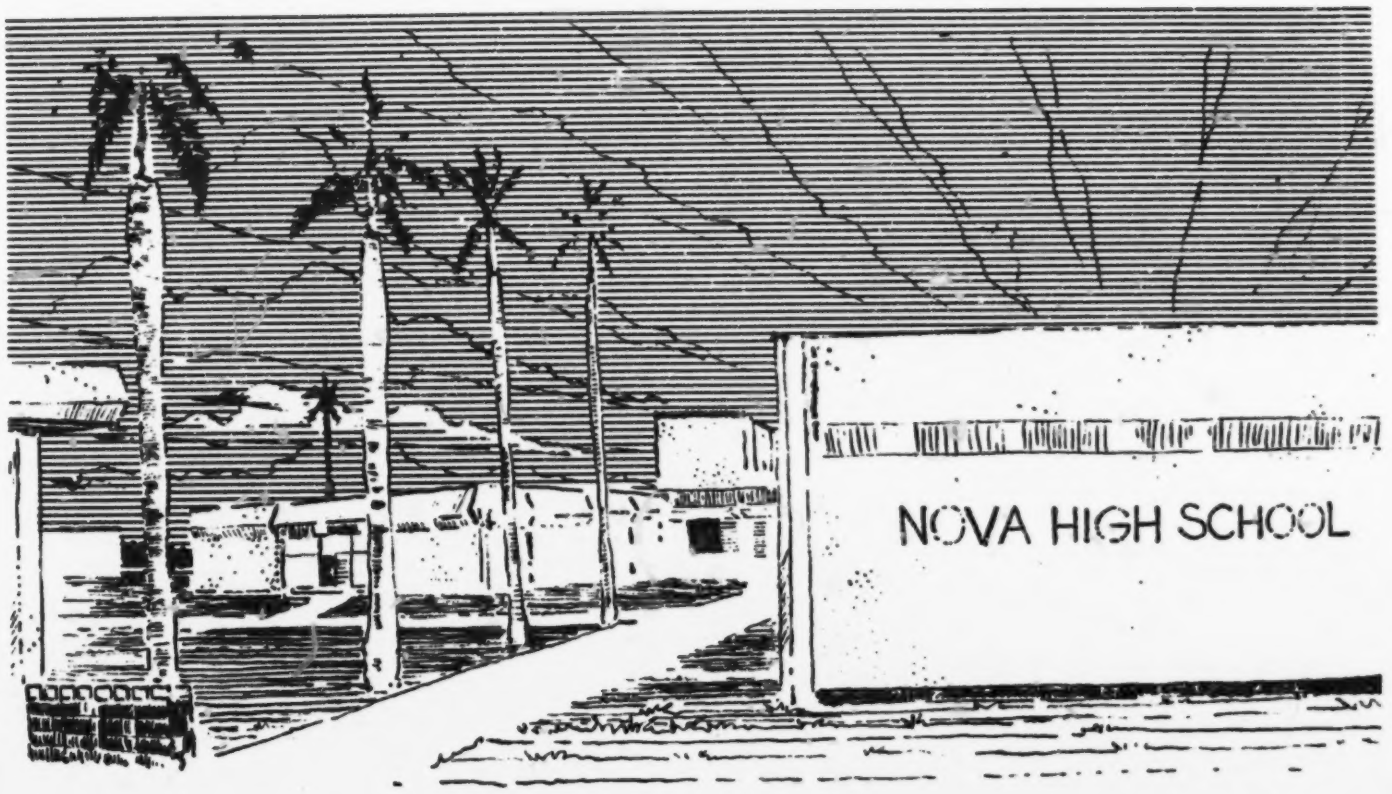
It is not experimental in curriculum, but in concept. Its construction features, equipment, teaching aids, and instructional methods have been tested and proved individually in other school systems.

Its uniqueness lies in the fact that for the first time anywhere, all of these proven procedures are being brought together with excellent teachers and superior buildings for maximum efficiency. The environment is adapted to suit the educational program; the program is not restricted to conform to physical facilities.

Nova is a space-age school; its primary purpose is to utilize 'scientific methods of learning in a scientific age.' Yet in its basic philosophy it represents a return to fundamental education. This emphasis on fundamental education demands more from students in both time and effort. In the words of Arthur B. Wolfe, director and chief planner of the Nova Plan, 'Attending Nova is a full-time job for all students.'

Operating on a trimester system, Nova has lengthened both the school day and year. There are five regular class periods, each 70 minutes long. In addition there is an optional hour in the school day when students may do research or participate in non-credit activities such as clubs, vocal or instrumental music training, school yearbook and newspaper activities, driver training and interscholastic athletics.

The school year totals 220 days – 40 days longer than the national average, 40 days longer than required by Florida law, and 25 days longer than any other public school system in the country.



All students are required to take English, mathematics, science, a foreign language, social science, technical science, and physical education each school year.

Despite the seeming rigidity of this curriculum, there is flexibility within its framework. With an educational program truly tailored to individual needs, Nova brings into practice the theory of 'taking each student as far as he can go.'

Nova is a non-graded school. In its first year of operation, year levels seven through ten are included; within the next two years eleventh and twelfth year levels will be added.

Instead of being 'promoted' a grade each year, students will progress through a series of achievement levels in each subject area. As a student masters one level in a course, he may continue to the next on any day, week, or month of the school year. The speed of his advancement depends upon his capabilities and interest. This same non-graded system will be followed when elementary schools are constructed and begin operation under the Nova Plan.

Nova includes a cross-section of students and not just those who have above average intelligence. The program is designed to meet the critical needs of each student. However, since each level must be mastered in turn, no one can fail and no one will be required to repeat an entire year's work in any subject.

Talented students who progress rapidly may be graduated early with faculty permission. However, no one will be graduated in less than two and one-third years above the ninth-year level.

Students should anticipate no difficulties in meeting college entrance requirements since graduates will have completed four years of each basic subject as well as additional electives.

Both parent and student reactions to this new and stimulating instructional environment have been overwhelmingly favorable. Because of Nova's unique nature, students are accepted on a voluntary basis. Currently there is a long waiting list of applicants for enrollment next year.

This enthusiasm prevails despite the fact that students must provide their own transportation or pay bus fare to and from school, pay a fee to defray expenses for additional instructional materials and automated teaching devices, and purchase special textbooks not available from the state sources.

In nearly every way, Nova might be termed a 'do-it-yourself' school. 'Understanding' and 'self-motivation' are key words in its educational program.

The curriculum is designed to teach students the 'how' and 'why' as well as the 'what.' Independent research is encouraged in every possible way so that students may learn to take pride and pleasure in stimulating study.

Mr. Wolfe sums up his educational philosophy this way:

'The student must learn to identify and analyze problems, gather relevant information, develop and test plausible solutions, and evaluate outcomes. Anything that is only partially learned is of little use either in dealing with practical matters or as a stepping stone to further learning.

'As educators we have a serious responsibility, too. Students go through the public school system only once. If we don't give them the best possible education, do the best job we can do, we have deprived them of something to which they are entitled and can never find anywhere else.'

Nova is trying to do 'the best job it can do' by utilizing the very new teaching techniques, combining and adapting them to suit individual programs, and constantly striving for improvement.

Students have the benefit of exceptionally well-qualified teachers who are able to devote all their time to teaching. Teacher aides assist in the instructional program and clerical assistants take over paper work thereby relieving instructors of time-consuming chores related only indirectly to the actual process of teaching. Team teaching is utilized effectively in selected subject areas.

Classrooms have been constructed with movable partitions so that students may study in large or small rooms, as the day's activities dictate. Work space also has been provided for small discussion groups and for individual research.

Keeping abreast with the electronics era, Nova is a prime showcase for automation. A closed-circuit television system will not only permit telecasts throughout the school but will allow video tapes to be made of lessons and lectures for use at later dates. Overhead projectors and tape recorders are installed at all teacher centers.

The traditional library has been replaced by resource centers, located in the language arts and science buildings. Here, reference books share space with tape recorders, microfilm readers and teaching machines.

Expensive? Yes. But these instructional aids did not boost Nova's overall cost. Neither did such items as air conditioning, carpeted floors, and special acoustical materials – all of which combine to make an atmosphere more conducive to learning.

These innovations were financed by the omission of facilities which long have been considered standard equipment in conventional schools. Nova has no large assembly-type auditorium, no huge spectator-sized gymnasium, and no expensive kitchen and cafeteria. Students either bring their lunch or purchase food at snack bars, supervised by a dietician, and eat in a protected outside dining area.

Nova already has become an educational showcase in its own area, Broward County, as well as the nation. Many of its ideas and procedures will be incorporated in new schools and adapted to existing plants throughout the county and the country.

Nova's goal: To provide the best possible education at the lowest practical cost.